



The Regent Secondary School

Year 7 Entrance Examination Specimen Paper II

(Reading passage)

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Read the passage on the next page carefully before attempting to answer the questions in the Question and Answer booklet.

SAMPLE

This is an article written by a father who takes his daughter on a weekend survival course.

“Can I eat this?” asks a boy of about 12, picking up a live beetle. We are in the car park – the survival course hasn’t even started and children are already volunteering to eat insects. It’s the first sign my daughter Phoebe, 10, and I might have a challenge ahead.

I am not an outdoors person. I thought we’d maybe learn to cook sausages on an open fire, whittle pointed sticks and find out how to steer from the North Star. These experiences would pay for the lack of camping in my daughter’s life – only someone else would be in charge of erecting the tents!

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We are ordered to smear mud all over our faces and arms to block out our natural smells. “Now into the forest. One, two, three, four…”

Carrying our huge rucksacks, we follow our leader. Phoebe has a trainer sucked off her foot in the mud. She looks at me and says, “Dad, you said this was camping!” But worse is to follow. Soon we’re crossing a river on a rope and cleaning rat-filled river water by filtering it through an old sock.

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Further into the woods mealworms are dug out from under rotten bark. “Don’t swallow them whole or they’ll chew your insides before your stomach digests them,” our instructor says, placing one on each of our tongues. Everyone else laughs and swallows their mealworm. Some boys even ask for more. Somehow I get it down. What’s more, so does my daughter.

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The other dads are fitter than I am; some have tough jobs. Others already know how to tell which way north is from how moss grows on trees. I haven’t done well. I fell off the commando rope (the only dad to do so), I tangled our net fishing and, now, I can’t follow instructions.

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With even my daughter despairing of me, we build a fern and stick shelter to sleep in. Phoebe and I gather bracken, desperate to soften the hard earth and cover the frame to keep out the rain. When we rejoin the group, we discover a dead rabbit hanging from a tree. Our dinner. Round the camp fire, our instructor says that the real secret of survival is positivity.

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After our rabbit dinner we retire to our shelters. There are strange noises. The hoot of an owl. The choke of a fox. Phoebe’s head-torch breaks when I panic and thrash about at the sight of a giant millipede in my sleeping bag.

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“Have you noticed the harness in our packs? We’re going to have to climb something tomorrow,” I tell Phoebe, sorrowfully.

“Think of Sunday lunch when we get home,” she says.

“Positivity?”

She nods and pats my head. Soon Phoebe is snoring and I’m awake. The smell of fern reminds me of childhood. I close my eyes but hear more unfamiliar noises. Things crawl

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across my cold face and I don't sleep until I see sunlight through the trees.

That morning we abseil down a 20ft drop. Sunday lunch.

We cross rivers on fallen trees. Sunday lunch.

The final challenge is wading through a neck-deep still pond fully clothed. The mud is knee-deep. Sunday lunch.

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The cold takes my breath away. But on the other side Land Rovers wait to return us to base.

Back home we *do* eat Sunday lunch. We have baths. I feel proud now. I tell everyone what we did. Nobody believes I ate a mealworm!

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